

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0440

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

CINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

S E C R E T NICOSIA 3873

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: X-GDS1

TAGS: UR, EAIR, CY, UK, TU

SUBJECT: AEROFLOT OFFER TO CYPRUS AIRWAYS; NICOSIA AIRPORT

REOPENING

REF: STATE 242003

1. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER OLVER SAW CLERIDES NOVEMBER 4 FOR DISCUSSION INTER ALIA OF AEROFLOT AND BMA OFFERS AS WELL AS BRIEFLY, NICOSIA AIRPORT REOPENING.

2. CLERIDES MENTIONED ONE NEW FACTOR ARGUING FOR QUICK ACTION TO COUNTER AEROFLOT OFFER. AEROFLOT HAS TOLD GOC THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL LARNACA AIRPORT REHABILITATED/EXTENDED. IT IS PREPARED INITIATE OPERATIONS IMMEDIATELY USING YEROSKIPOS STRIP IN PAPHOS. USSR IS ASSERTING THAT ITS EXISTING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH CYPRUS ENTITLE IT TO THIS

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SINCE NICOSIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS CLOSED.

CLERIDES EXPRESSED TO OLVER SAME CONCERN HE HAD TO ME ABOUT
LIKELIHOOD OF IMMINENT SURFACING OF AEROFLOT OFFER IN
COMMUNIST PRESS.

3. OLVER PROVIDED CLERIDES WITH INFORMATION CONTRASTING
BMA AND AEROFLOT OFFERS. WHILE IT TRUE THAT YAK-40 COULD
OPERATE FROM YEROSKIPOS AIRPORT AND BMA'S VISCOUNTS COULD NOT,
VISCOUNTS HAVE OPERATING RANGE OF 1500 MILES WITH 50 PASSENGERS.
YAK-40, ON OTHER HAND, COULD CARRY ONLY 12-14 PASSENGERS AS
FAR AS ATHENS; ONLY 6 OR 7 TO SOPHIA WHICH BEING
MENTIONED
BY AEROFLOT AS ITS DESIRED EUROPEAN TERMINUS. THIS IS ASIDE
FROM QUESTION OF YAK-40'S LACK OF AIRWORTHINESS CERTIFICATE.

4. CLERIDES AGREED THAT IF AIRPORT FACILITY EXISTED WHICH
COULD BE USED BY VISCOUNTS, HE WOULD PREFER BMA OFFER, HE
TOLD OLVER THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD MEET THIS WEEK TO
MAKE FINAL DECISION ON EXTENSION OF LARNACA WHICH, WHEN
COMPLETED, COULD BE USED BY BMA. HE ESTIMATED OPTIMISTICALLY
THAT WORK ON LARNACA COULD BE COMPLETED IN EIGHT WEEKS. UK
EXPERTS IN SBA'S THINK SIX MONTHS MORE LIKELY.

5. OLVER COMMENTED TO ME THAT THE LONGER IT TAKES TO GET
LARNACA OPENED, THE MORE PROBABLE THAT GOC WILL FEEL IT HAS
TO ACCEPT AEROFLOT OFFER.

6. OLVER AND I HAVE AGREED SET UP ON AN URGENT BASIS A
COMMITTEE TO STUDY ASPECTS OF AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT FOR
OPERATION NICOSIA AIRPORT UNDER UN/ICAO SUPERVISION WITH
GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOT OBSERVERS. BECAUSE OF UN/ICAO
CENTRAL ROLE, OLVER IS ASKING UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
WECKMANN DESIGNATE HIS SENIOR POLITICAL ADVISOR TO ATTEND.
WE ARE AIMING FOR A FIRST MEETING NOVEMBER 5 AND HOPE TO HAVE
COMMENTS FOR DEPARTMENT BY NOVEMBER 6.

7. I HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN CHRISTOPHIDES NOVEMBER 5
TO DISCUSS AEROFLOT OFFER PURSUANT INSTRUCTIONS PARA 4 STATE
240145 AS AMENDED BY SECTO 317. CRAWFORD

SECRET

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